

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 0117

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, RH, UK
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: COMMENTS ON FIRST DAY'S JANUARY 30
MALTA TALKS

1. WE KNEW THAT THE RESTRAINED DEMANOR OF THE PF DURING THE MORNING SESSION WAS NO GUARANTEE THAT THE FAMILIAR TOUGH POSITIONS WOULD NOT RE-EMERGE. NKOMO'S LUNCHTIME STATEMENTS TO DICK MOOSE (REITERATED AT THE OUTSET OF THE AFTERNOON SESSION) DID SEEM, HOWEVER, TO OFFER THE PROSPECT OF SOME RUNNING ROOM. ON THAT BASIS, WE HAD DECIDED BEFORE GOING INTO THE AFTERNOON THAT WE WOULD KEEP THE SESSION SHORT (IN KEEPING WITH A PRIVATE SUGGESTION FROM NKOMO) AND AVOID GETTING INTO SPECIFICS. WE WOULD NOT LAY DOWN OUR REVISED TRANSITION PROPOSALS (AS OWEN WAS DISPOSED TO DO) BUT WAIT FOR THE PF PAPER PROMISED BY NKOMO AT LUNCH. NEVERTHELESS, OWEN DID PRESS NKOMO FOR PF VIEWS ON THE TRANSITION BUT BACKED AWAY WHEN NKOMO CLEARLY PLAYED FOR TIME. FOR SOME REASON OWEN THEN LAYED OUT A VERY GENERAL OUTLINE OF OUR VARIOUS ADVISORY COUNCIL IDEAS. WHEN MUGABE REACTED SHARPLY TO THESE SAYING THE PF HAD "NOT BEEN FIGHTING TO END UP WITH SEATS ON SOME
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ADVISORY COUNCIL" NKOMO MOVED QUITE DELIBERATELY TO CUT OFF WHAT CLEARLY WOULD HAVE BECOME A CONFRONTATION.

2. ON THE BASIS OF THIS EPISODE AND HIS OWN CONVERSATION WITH NKOMO AT LUCH, DAVID OWEN BELIEVES THAT NKOMO IS FAR MORE DISPOSED TO DEAL THAN IS MUGABE.

HIS THINKING IMMEDIATELY RUNS TO HOW THE TWO CAN BE SPLIT AND NKOMO GOTTEN TOGETHER WITH SMITH. HE SEES THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN AS THE INSTRUMENT FOR BRINGING THIS ABOUT.

3. ANDY AND I HAVE PROPOSED TO OWEN THAT WE HEAR THE PF ON THEIR PROPOSALS IN THE MORNING, BUT AVOID COMING TO BLOWS OVER WHAT WE FULLY EXPECT TO BE UNACCEPTABLE ELEMENTS. IN THE AFTERNOON WE WOULD LAY DOWN OUR ELABORATED TRANSITION PROPOSALS (WHICH OWEN HAS UNFORTUNATELY ALREADY FORESHADOWED). FOLLOWING SOME DISCUSSION WE WOULD BREAK FOR THE DAY, GIVING US TIME FOR FURTHER REFLECTION AND INFORMAL CONTACTS. A WEDNESDAY MORNING SESSION MIGHT THEN BE OUR FINAL MEETING AND WE WOULD HOPE TO END WITH AGREEMENT TO CONSIDER THE RESULTS AT A LATER DATE.

4. BOTH WE AND OWEN AGREE THAT OUR PLAN SHOULD BE KEPT IN PLAY. IN SOME MANNER YET TO BE DETERMINED WE WOULD GET QUICKLY TO MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE FOLLOWING THESE TALKS TO REASSURE THEM THAT THEY ARE NOT BEING FORZEN OUT AND TO WARN THEM AGAINST CLOSING A DEAL WITH SMITH. AT THE SAME TIME WE WOULD CONSIDER WHETHER NKOMO'S SEEMINGLY MORE FLEXIBLE ATTITUDE OFFERS ANY LONGER TERM PROSPECTS. IN THIS CONNECTION
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BOTH NKOMO AND MUGABE ARE SEEKING PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH ANDY AND THESE MAY GIVE US FURTHER INSIGHTS. WE WILL ALSO SEEK TO FIND OUT WHAT VIERERA, MACHEL'S VERY ASTUTE OBSERVER, IS THINKING.

5. THESE ARE OBVIOUSLY ONLY MUSINGS ON THE FIRST DAY'S EVENTS. ALL IN ALL, IT WAS NOT A BAD DAY. WE HAD EXPECTED FIREY RHETORIC AND DEMANDS THAT WE DENOUNCE THE SALISBURY TALKS. PERHAPS THE PF JUST WANTED TO ESTABLISH A REASONABLE IMAGE AND WILL RE-EMERGE TOMORROW UNITED ON A HARD LINE. LAINGEN

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